

(U.S. Patent No. 5,867,821) in view of RAMSHAW et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,791,907); rejected claims 3, 9, 10, and 18-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over BALLANTYNE et al. in view of RAMSHAW et al., and further in view of CORN et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0053513); rejected claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by SIEFERT (U.S. Patent No. 5,904,485); and allowed claims 25-28.

By this amendment, Applicants propose canceling claims 1-3, 5-10, and 12-23 without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering the above rejections moot.

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 25-28 are allowable over the art of record. Applicants further submit that claim 24, which includes subject matter similar to claim 25, is also allowable over the art of record. Examiner Rovnak confirmed that claim 24 should have also been indicated as allowable over the art of record in a telephone interview, conducted August 7, 2002.

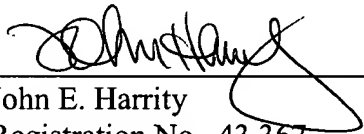
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of this application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Applicants submit that the present amendment does not raise new issues and does not require a further search of the art. Moreover, the present amendment places the application in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of the amendment is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the

filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1070
and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectively submitted,

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